

Royal Mail News

Summertime

Five stamps on the theme of Summertime will go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters on 2 August. This is the third in the Four Seasons series begun with the Wintertime stamps in 1992, Autumn in 1993, and will conclude with Spring next year. The Summertime stamps feature well-known Summer events.

The **19p** stamp (2nd class inland rate) features the Royal Welsh Show, held at Llanellwedd, Builth Wells, Powys. The Show, held annually in the third week of July on a permanent showground, provides a prime shop window for farming in Wales. The Show, which runs for four days, attracts more than 200,000 visitors, 6500 entries of farm livestock and up to 1000 trade stands together with sections covering the whole of farming and rural life in Wales.



Included in the many competitions and events are: fleece competition, sheep shearing, produce and handicrafts, honey show, Miss Royal Welsh, poultry and pigeon section, Tug of War, horse shoeing and wrought ironwork.

Another great Welsh event, the Eisteddfod has been commemorated on stamps, in 1976 (SG 1010, 1013), and Welsh animals have been depicted on stamps of 1978 (1065), 1984 (1243) and 1992 (1591).

Wimbledon, probably the best-known summer event in the UK, is the subject of the **25p** stamp (1st class inland and EU basic rate). The Church Road ground in Wimbledon, known to television viewers throughout the world, is home to the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, founded as the All England Croquet Club in 1869. Lawn Tennis was added to the title in 1877 and the current name introduced in 1882. The first championship was held in 1877 at the old ground in Worple Road, the Club moved to its current home in 1922. Over the years all the top tennis stars have played at Wimbledon, the players attracted to the tournament not just for the fabulous prize money but for the opportunity to play in the world's most prestigious tournament. President of the Club is HRH The Duke of Kent, the Duke and the Duchess normally present the trophies to the winning players.

This will be Britain's third tennis stamp. The first – an 8½p value in the Rackets set of 1977 (SG1022) commemorated the centenary of the Wimbledon championships. The second tennis stamp was released in 1988 – a 34p denomination in a Sport issue (1390). A post office operates at Wimbledon for the two weeks of the championships and special postmarks are



used on mail posted there.

There are few spectacles as magnificent as that of a flotilla of yachts sweeping through the beautiful waters of the Solent in Cowes Week which is the subject of the **30p** stamp (basic rate for letters to European countries outside the EU). It is believed that Cowes owes its origins as a yachting capital of the world to the building of a small boat, *Rat O'Wight*, on the banks of the River Medina for the use of Queen Elizabeth I.



... of an exclusive handful of the participants... the sunshine elbows its way into
 and profile of the participants... sporting events dominated by the style
 Royal Yacht Club; there is more to summer's week at Cowes than simply yachts. There is the exclusive
 rustic club-hall and there is genuine family-summer living at the seaside and the chance to paddle.
 ... of the quiet Hampshire hills,
 ... of the sun-drenched hills,
 ... of the sun-drenched hills,
 ... of the sun-drenched hills,



Lords

Cricket is the most English of games. Whether played at Lord's or in the shires, it embodies all the romance of an English summer.

The match on the village green is just a rustic, unpretentious and occasional summer pastime. At Lord's it is a bet, the 'honor', and the flick of a white flannelled sprinter are the summertime signs of summer.

Thousands of people will pack Lord's to watch international matches or county cricket. This is the headquarters of the game and it commands worldwide respect. There are smart summer clothes for private boxes, magnificent is the view. Nothing detracts from a joy to witness of the game. Hampers of food and drink are easy to hand.

Nothing involves the spirit of an English summer quite like cricket, and nowhere is more representative of this quintessentially English sport than Lord's cricket ground.



Llanellwedd

All the talk of a rare life in a Welsh winter culminates in an enthusiastic celebration of agriculture at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in the summer.

For four days annually, cows, sheep, pigs, goats and horses are groomed to glister and are gazed at, prodded and judged. Coats and displays of herbaceous plants which will greatly benefit from the preceding weeks of sunshine, the carnage of ripe fruit and vegetables; the studs of earth colours and bright yellow, the avocation could there be of the fecundity of the earth. This show is

the sun and there are harvest days provide regale from the water post and the one to come. Among the picnics in the sunshine and the laughter from the beer-homage to it.

Wales's summer



Wimbledon

One of the most familiar to tennis ball on racket. There games was or racket and white. For beyond Centre Court is an devoted, pink-cheeked people are huge. But because of the's Nonetheless, lady to the last, mind, and nothing not even a



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Sailing became a leisure pastime in the 17th century; Charles II was presented with a Dutch built yacht, which he sailed on the Thames. King George IV was interested in yachting and in 1820 granted the title 'Royal' to the Yacht Club, founded in 1815. The Club became the Royal Yacht Squadron in 1833.

The two World Wars punctuated the progress of yachting. After 1945 yachting changed from being the province of the rich to a sport for the enthusiast. Smaller boats became more popular and this bred a whole new generation of highly skilled sailors. In 1964 the Duke of Edinburgh became Commodore of the Squadron and encouraged the setting up of what is now known as 'the Cowes Combined Clubs' to organise Cowes Week using one starting line and one set of sailing instructions for the entire week. The daily races are run from the Royal Yacht Squadron line using the facilities of their Platform (a red and white striped roofed structure), the Battlements, which date back to 1538, and the Gun Line on the seafront with 22 William IV cannon. Over the past 30 years the number of boats taking part in Cowes Week has



increased, reaching a record 904 entries in 1989. A total of over 6300 individual starters raced over the nine days in 25 different classes. Cowes plays host to visiting foreign warships, sail training vessels and HMY *Britannia*, whose elegant presence with her dark blue hull and royal standards fluttering in the sea breeze adds greatly to the general charisma.

Yachts have featured on one earlier set of stamps – issued in 1975 on the theme of Sailing (SG 980/3).

The 35p value (overseas postcard rate) features Lord's, home of cricket – the most English of games, whether played at Lord's or in the shires. It embodies all the romance of an English summertime. Lord's has been the governing body of English cricket since 1783. The first ground, in Dorset Square, was opened by Thomas Lord (1755-1832) in 1787. It was moved to its present site, taking the original turf, in 1814. Lord's has been home to the Middlesex Cricket Club since 1877. The first test match against Australia was played there in the 1880s; the first tests against the West Indies, New Zealand, India, and Pakistan were played respectively in 1928, 1931, 1932 and 1954. The famous Gateway at Lord's, built in 1923, is a memorial to the most famous cricketer, W G Grace (1848-1915), who featured on stamps marking the centenary of County Cricket in 1973 (SG 928/30). Dr Grace was also portrayed on one of the 34p stamps issued in commemoration of Australia's bicentenary in 1988 (1398).

The final stamp, 41p denomination (basic overseas airmail letter rate), features the Braemar Gathering in Scotland's Grampian Region. There have been Gatherings of one sort or another at Braemar since the days of King Malcolm Canmore, 900 years ago. The



Gathering as we know it today, organised by the Braemar Royal Highland Society, started in 1817. In the 1840s Queen Victoria and Prince Albert first visited the Scottish Highlands and from 1848 rented the castle at Balmoral. They purchased the castle four years later and became regular visitors at Braemar. Thus began the tradition of the Royal Family visiting the Braemar Gathering.

International athletes take part in the "heavy" and "track" events. Pipers and dancers are much admired by the thousands who come to the event, held in the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park. Teams from the Forces compete in the inter-services tug of war championship and in the Services Medley Relay Race. Scottish Pipe bands are to the fore; the appearance of the customary Massed Pipe Bands is one of the keynotes of the event. The Gathering is world famous for its friendship and hospitality and its delightful setting beneath encircling heather-clad hills.

A piper at a Highland Gathering featured on an 11p stamp in the British Cultural Traditions set of 1976 (SG 1012).

The dates for these summer events in 1994 are: Wimbledon Tennis Championships, 20 June-3 July; Royal Welsh Show, 18-21 July; Cowes Week, 30 July-6 August; and Braemar Gathering, 3 September. Cricket matches are held at Lord's throughout the summer.

The stamps were designed by Matthew Cook, his first stamp designs for Royal Mail. A book featuring Mr Cook's work and a set of the Summertime stamps will be available from the Bureau and Post Office philatelic outlets from 2 August, price £14.99. Early ordering is advised. The book will be reviewed here next month.

Matthew Cook, born in 1963, trained as an illustrator at St Martins School of Art and Kingston Polytechnic. Immediately after his degree he joined Operation Raleigh as staff artist where his love for reportage drawing took him to Papua New Guinea, Peru, Brazil and the West Indies. Recently work has taken him drawing all over the country with commissions for English Heritage, the Bank of Scotland, *The Times* and the Countryside Commission.

The stamp designs gave him the opportunity to see some famous British Summertime events at first hand. The theme and sketches were extended to produce a book in conjunction with the Royal Mail called *The British Season* and includes some of the drawings involved in the initial stages of the stamps.

Not having been to any of the events previously, Mr Cook was able to take a fresh outsider's look at these great British Summer institutions.

Technical Details

<i>Printers:</i> Harrison & Sons Ltd
<i>Process:</i> Photogravure
<i>Size:</i> 41 x 30mm
<i>Sheets:</i> 100
<i>Perforation:</i> 15 x 14
<i>Phosphor:</i> One band 19p; Phosphor Coated Paper 25p-41p
<i>Paper:</i> OBA free (OBA=Optical Brightening Agent)
<i>Gum:</i> PVA Dextrin
<i>Presentation Pack:</i> No.250 price £1.85
<i>Stamp Cards:</i> Nos.164a-e, price 25p each

First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main Post Offices, the Bureau, Collections, and Philatelic Counters around a week before 2 August, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service - collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps cancelled with a pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmark of the Bureau or Wimbledon price £2.18 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £1.86 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 2 August.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Wimbledon cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 53 Nine Elms Lane, LONDON SW8 5BB. The outer envelope should be endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue postmark".

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* - the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe, £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail).

Collectors are reminded that it will be in order to affix just the 19p Summertime stamp to covers to receive all-special cancels ("First Day

of Issue”, sponsored and philatelic counters), in use on 2 August. The minimum 1st class rule is suspended on this day as the Summertime set includes a 2nd class rate stamp. It should be noted that this concession applies only to the 19p Summertime stamp; covers bearing other than Summertime stamps must bear at least 1st class postage.

D-Day Stamps

The following information about each of the stamp designs may be of interest to some readers:

Reloading an RAF Boston

This is the first public appearance of a photograph which at the time was held back for security reasons and then lost until now. It shows an RAF Boston of 88th Squadron, whose aircraft were employed on D-Day in laying a smoke-screen on the Normandy beaches, and in taking reconnaissance photographs. Ground crew fitters are seen replacing the smoke canisters for another run, while the gunner looks on apprehensively. The aircraft were made in the USA by Douglas; the RAF gave them the name Boston. The photograph was taken by Lt S Devon, whose log for D-Day is held by the Imperial War Museum.



The photograph shows HMS *Warspite*, which had been in many actions before D-Day, shelling enemy positions on the Normandy coast. It was taken by McNaughton from the Captain class frigate HMS *Holmes* stationed nearby off the coast at Le Havre. In the foreground, a spotter on HMS *Holmes* is watching the bombardment; to his left is a signal lamp and behind him a range finder.

Commandos landing on “Gold” Beach

“Gold” Beach was one of the two-all-British landing beaches; troops started going ashore there at 07.25 on 6 June. This shot, taken by Sgt

Midgeley during D-Day (precise time not known), shows commandos - characterised by their blackened faces and their use of machine guns - landing from the Landing Craft, Infantry, *Silent Knight*.

Infantry re-grouping on “Sword” Beach

“Sword” Beach was the other all-British beach and, as on “Gold”, troops started landing there at 07.25. Several companies - among them the 27th Armoured Brigade, 8th Infantry Brigade, and No.4 Commando - had been temporarily held up on Queen Red sector, where this photograph was taken by Sgt Mapham. The picture is believed to show men of the 1st Suffolk Signallers.

Advancing inland from Ouistreham Beachhead

This photograph, taken at Ouistreham on “Sword” Beach, shows a Sherman DD amphibious tank of the 13th/18th Hussars advancing with troops of No.4 Commando. The advance was filmed by Sgt Laws of the Army Film Unit, working as a team with a still photographer (Sgt Mapham).

National Postal Museum Postcards

The Museum will issue a set of four postcards on postal uniforms on 2 August 1994. These will be available from the Museum's shop, 25p each, or as a set for £1 from : British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

A special handstamp will be available on the day of issue. Cards/covers to receive this should be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, KEB, LONDON EC1A 1AA requesting “Museum Special - 2 August”. The Museum's regular Maltese Cross handstamp will also be available - ask for Handstamp No. 1985.

Royal Mail at Golf Tournaments

Royal Mail will have stands selling the new Golf stamps and related products at the Scottish Open at Gleneagles, 5-8 July, and at the British Open at Turnberry, 11-17 July. The five Golf stamps, to be issued on 5 July, were previewed in last month's *Bulletin*.

Prince of Wales Watercolours Exhibition

Royal Mail is sponsoring an exhibition tour of watercolours by Prince Charles, to mark the 25th anniversary of his Investiture. This can be seen at: Sotheby's - London 24 June-24 July, Art Gallery & Museum Kelvingrove - Glasgow 5 August-4 September. Entrance will be £1.50; children under 11 free.